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PTOLEMY'S MILITARY AND POLITICAL OPERATIONS IN GREECE IN 314–308 BC

The territory of Greece proper played a special role during the fights that broke out among the generals of Alexander the Great after his death; it was an extremely important stage of events and an object of interest of the most significant participants in these struggles. As a result of their geographical location and strategic significance, Greece and Macedonia were key to victory in the game in which control of Alexander the Great's whole legacy was at stake, which was the goal of at least some of the Diadochoi.

Control over Macedonia, as well as the role of regent to Alexander the Great's successors (at least until they were alive) was an important bargaining chip in the fight for influence in the emerging political order. Attempts at achieving these two goals were the main reasons behind successive wars among the Diadochoi. The territory of Greece proper was a stage of heavy military operations, which meant that relations with the Greek *poleis* were of primary importance to the fighting Diadochoi. Friendly or hostile relations with the *poleis* could often significantly influence the fate of campaigns on their territories. Opening or closing the city gates, or blocking convenient routes, could even seal the fate of a military operation. Moreover, and equally significantly, friendly relations with the Greek cities meant that mercenaries could be recruited. All this led to playing the Greek card and waving the banner of the freedom of the Greek cities, first started by Polyperchon and followed by others, including Antigonos and Ptolemy. The ability to combine diplomacy and military operations, always important to succeed, was the key to success on this extremely complicated territory.

The first signs of Ptolemy's political activity in Greece appeared as early as 315 BC; they were related to building a coalition of the Diadochoi against Antigonos I Monophthalmus. The ambitions of Antigonos, who had the largest military forces and financial means¹ at his disposal since the Treaty of Triparadeisos, and particularly since Eumenes was eliminated, were focused on controlling the whole state left by Alexander the Great. In the summer or autumn of 315 BC, Antigonos drove Seleucos's away from his Babylonian satrapy; the latter turned to Ptolemy for help.² Together they formed an alliance

¹ Antigonos gained Eumenes' veterans and treasury in Susa: Diod. 19.48.8.

² Diod. 19.55.1–4. For the date see Errington 1977: 486–487.

against Antigonus with Cassander who controlled Macedonia and Lysimachus who ruled Thrace. When Antigonus rejected the ultimatum put forward by the allies, the Third War of the Successors started (314–311 BC).³

The situation on the Balkan Peninsula was extremely complicated at the time. Cassander had Macedonia under control, and having got rid of Olympias, he also took over custody of Alexander the Great's children. He also managed to subjugate the Epirote League and Acarnania.⁴ Cassander made a series of steps to strengthen his position in the country – he married Alexander's sister, Thessalonica, he founded the cities of Cassandreia and Thessalonica. However, there were still Polyperchon and his son Alexander, who had been fighting against Cassander and the other allied Diadochoi since 319 BC. Cassander did manage to reduce their influence considerably; he regained most cities on the Peloponnese, and he could count on the favourable Greek opinion when he rebuilt Thebes that had been destroyed by Alexander the Great.⁵ However, Alexander retained control over Ithome, and his father kept his influence over the Aetolians. Both could become Antigonus's potential allies.

It is a well-known fact that there was indeed an agreement between Antigonus and Polyperchon.⁶ For the latter it might have been the last opportunity to play a significant role in building a new order. For Antigonus, on the other hand, Polyperchon was an important ally, capable of engaging Cassander's forces in Greece, thus making it impossible for him to cross to Asia and attack Antigonus in the centre of his domains.

Military operations initially led Antigonus to success. The attack on Syria gave him the majority of ports on the Phoenician coast, which had been controlled by Ptolemy.⁷ This success enabled Antigonus to gain an advantage at sea, which he increased further by founding the Nesiotic League.⁸ The situation of his allies in Greece also improved dramatically. Antigonus's envoy, Aristodemos, managed to recruit 8,000 troops on the Peloponnese and to bring the leader of the Aetolians over to his side, which neutralised Acarnania siding with Cassander.⁹ The bestowal of the title of *strategus* of Peloponnese on Polyperchon was of slightly lesser importance, although it could be used for propaganda and it was a testament to his alliance with Antigonus in the first place.¹⁰ The campaigns in Asia Minor were also successful for Monophthalmus.¹¹ He did not neglect propaganda either; he called a meeting of Macedonian soldiers which proclaimed Cassander an enemy of the state and handed over the supreme power to Antigonus. Monophthalmus also played the Greek card; Greek cities were proclaimed free and the defence of this freedom was,

³ The demands included returning Babylon to Seleucos, but the allies also wanted a new division of territories in Asia Minor and Syria (the latter was to go to Ptolemy) and a distribution of money taken from Eumenes by Antigonus (Diod. 19.57).

⁴ *SIG* 653, 4.

⁵ Diod. 19.53.2; Paus. 9.7.1–2. Gullath (1982: 86–89) and Errington (1977: 495) date these events to 315 BC, whereas A.B. Bosworth (1992: 81) to 316 BC.

⁶ Diod. 19.57.5. Antigonus envoy's task was to conclude the agreement with Polyperchon and Alexander, but also recruitment of mercenaries, cf. Simpson 1957: 371–373.

⁷ Only Tyre resisted for a longer time. The Ptolemaic garrison has surrendered in 313 BC: Diod. 19.61.5.

⁸ For the beginnings of the League of the Islanders see Simpson 1959: 395; Wehrli 1968; Buraselis 1982: 41–43, 60–87.

⁹ Diod. 19.66.2; 19.67.3.

¹⁰ Diod. 19.60.1. For this topic see Bengtson 1937: 167–168.

¹¹ Diod. 19.60.2, cf. Buraselis 1982: 41–44.

according to the official propaganda, Antigonus's most important goal. This was a well-aimed blow, mostly against Cassander for whom friendly relations with the Greek *poleis* were key to maintaining control over Greece; regarding this issue he basically continued his father's policy, i.e. he based his power on garrisons and supporting pro-Macedonian oligarchic rulers.

As Lysimachus was struggling with unrest in Thrace,¹² the only person who could back Cassander in Greece was Ptolemy, even though his attention was focused on protecting Egypt's eastern borders, which were directly threatened after Antigonus captured Syria. Ptolemy's operations focused on the coast of Asia Minor. Ptolemy concentrated his marine forces on Cyprus and actively supported the satrap of Caria, Asandros, who was fighting against Antigonus's general Polemaios at the time.¹³ Despite such a difficult situation the satrap of Egypt also became involved in Greece. Probably in the winter of 314–313 BC¹⁴ he issued a declaration of freedom of the Greek *poleis*.¹⁵ This fact is often interpreted as only intended to counterbalance Antigonus's policy and to neutralise his act on the same issue. Certainly this was the prime objective for using this banner. However, Ptolemy's action may also be viewed as an introduction to a Greek policy that was much wider in scope. His declaration, like Antigonus's, threatened the interests of his ally, Cassander. In this regard Ptolemy was in a much better situation than his ally; his account was clear of conflicts with the *poleis* attached to autonomy.¹⁶ Making this catchword a reality would, however, mean acting in the interests of the opposite side, since it would be connected with suppressing his ally's influence in Greece. However, his skilful actions and waving the banner of the freedom of the cities enhanced Ptolemy's prospects in future.¹⁷

At the moment, though, the Egyptian satrap's more vested interests were east of Egypt. A large-scale campaign to Cyprus led to significant success; Ptolemy also lent additional support to Asandros in Caria. Polykleitos was sent to the Peloponnese with fifty ships, but he left Greece very soon when he found out that Alexander, son of Polyperchon, went over to Cassander's side. Although Polykleitos's quick return to the Pamphilian Sea may indicate the Egyptian satrap's scant interest in Greek matters, it does not necessarily have to be a full picture of his intents. Greece was undoubtedly a front of second importance to Ptolemy. The forces at Polykleitos's disposal were not large enough to enable him large-scale operations; besides, a too independent operation would mean, as mentioned above, undermining Cassander and consequently strengthening Antigonus's position. However, the forces were strong enough to demonstrate his presence in Greece and to gain a foothold for future. Moreover, Alexander's defection to Antigonus's side led to a significant change

¹² Diod. 19.73.1–10.

¹³ Diod. 19.62.2–3. At this time Ptolemy's relations with Rhodes became loose (cf. Moser 1914: 64–66) and Seleucus's earlier expedition ended in an unsuccessful siege of Eritrea (Diod. 19.60.4). Asandros has earlier supported the Athenians against Antigonus (*JG* II/III 1, 450, see O'Sullivan 1997: 107–116; Lambert 1999: 129–130).

¹⁴ For the date see Errington 1977: 497; Huss 2001: 150.

¹⁵ Ptolemy could only be held responsible for the relations in the cities of Cyrenaica at the time. The *diagramma* he issued there (*SEG* IX 1) that regulated matters in the region gave him control over the cities there and his interests were supported by military garrisons (Fraser 1956–1958: 120–127; Hölbl 2001: 15; Huss 2001: 100, note 30).

¹⁶ Green (1990: 26) is definitely right in saying that by concluding that his final opponent would be the victor of the conflict between Cassander and Antigonus, Ptolemy was already securing future means of propaganda. Cf. also Simpson 1959: 390; Will 1979: 56–57.

¹⁷ Diod. 19.62.5; 19.64.3–5.

in the distribution of forces and meant that Polykleitos's expedition was no longer an important reinforcement for Cassander. Additionally, the way the situation in Asia Minor unfolded hastened the decision for Polykleitos to leave the Peloponnese. Diodorus's account (19.64.5): ἤκουσεν ὅτι Θεόδοτος μὲν ὁ Αντιγόνου ναύαρχος ἐκ Πατάρων τῆς Λυκίας παραπλεῖ ταῖς ἀπὸ Ῥόδου ναυσίν, ἐχούσαις ἀπὸ Καρίας πληρώματα indicates that Antigonos's troops were successful in Caria. The return of Ptolemy's admiral was successful, since he managed to defeat a fleet led by Theodotos near Aphrodisias and to destroy Perilaos's land troops accompanying the fleet.¹⁸ This victory may have been particularly significant for Ptolemy's troops operating on Cyprus. In the wake of these successes, Ptolemy attempted to finish the war, which indicates that the progress of military operations was generally unfavourable for him and his forces were on the wane. The way subsequent military operations unfolded confirms this, particularly given the fact that in 313 BC it was Cassander who, despite difficult operations in Greece, had to give Ptolemy support in Caria.¹⁹ Ptolemy's negotiations with Antigonos, however, ended in fiasco.²⁰

In the following years Ptolemy was unable to actively join the war in Greece even though the events of 312–311 BC brought a lot of success to Antigonos's generals (mainly Polemaios) who had, apart from military forces, powerful support as a result of the popular catchword of the freedom of the *poleis*.²¹ However, Ptolemy himself was in an unfavourable situation. He had lost almost all of Caria, he had to deal with a revolt in Cyrenaica, he had to personally intervene on Cyprus to defend his interests, and the war over Syria against Antigonos, fought with varying success, ended in failure and this important land was impossible to recapture.²²

In 311 BC the Diadochoi signed a peace treaty which in Ptolemy's case meant a confirmation of his reign (naturally preserving the idea of unity of Alexander the Great's state) in Egypt, the cities of "Libia" and "Arabia", while his claims to Cyrenaica, Coele Syria and Cyprus were passed over in silence.²³ Such a treaty could not be satisfying to Ptolemy; in any case, it was also a moment of quiet for the other participants in this grand play before the final clash. On the one hand Antigonos Monophthalmus could consider himself a victor – without abandoning his universalistic plans, he was given a free hand in Asia (the treaty e.g. did not settle the matter of Seleucus).²⁴ On the other hand, Cassander was confirmed as *strategus* of Europe until Alexander IV came of age (which meant the boy's chances of survival were slim) and could count on rebuilding the position he had lost in

¹⁸ Diod. 19.64.5–78. Possibly the fleet Polykleitos intercepted was headed to Cyprus, which would confirm how grave the situation was (Huss 2001: 152, 446).

¹⁹ Diod. 19.68.2–7. Naturally, Cassander acted with his own interest in mind first; Antigonos controlling the situation in western Asia Minor would enable him to cross to Europe and attack Cassander directly in Macedonia and Greece. For the policy of Cassander: Buraselis 1982: 5–37.

²⁰ For the negotiations see Simpson 1954.

²¹ By the end of 312 Cassander had lost his influence in the whole of Greece, and ultimately also in Athens; his operation on Euboea ended in fiasco. Individual fighting spots remained only in northern and western parts of the Peloponnese and on the coast of the Ionian Sea. For those military operations see Simpson 1955: 36–37; Huss 2001: 158–159.

²² Diod. 19.75–93; *Milet* I. 3, no.123.3–4; I. 7, no. 244, see Hölbl 2001: 18; Huss 2001: 159–165. The one and only success of the coalition was the return of Seleucus to Babylon.

²³ Diod. 19.105. It is not clear whether the phrase *cities in "Libia"* covers the *poleis* of Cyrenaica (so Moser 1914: 36 *contra* Will 1960: 374; Hölbl 2001: 18). For more information on the treatise and the meaning of specific names cf. Braunert 1964: 84–88; Schmitt 1969: nr 428; Will 1979: 61–65; Buraselis 1982: 11–22; Mehl 1986: 120–129; Huss 2001: 166–169.

²⁴ Cf. Simpson 1954: 29–30; Mehl 1986: 121–128.

Greece. Lysimachus, who did not get too involved in military operations anyway, could focus on strengthening his position in Thrace and impose his rule on Thracian and Scythian dynasts. All in all, however, it was Ptolemy who had the best reasons for a quick clash and dealing new cards. It should be remembered that the peace negotiations of 311 BC initially got under way without Ptolemy's participation. Whether the peace initiative was put forward by Cassander or Antigonos,²⁵ it is certain that Cassander contacted only Lysimachus; it cannot be excluded that the reason for this was Cassander's mistrust of Ptolemy's plans for Greece. Having found out about the treaty signed by the remaining sides of the conflict, the satrap of Egypt, unable to risk isolation in the face of the conflict with Antigonos, acceded to the treaty himself.²⁶

It cannot be ruled out, however, that Ptolemy intentionally reconciled himself to losing Cyprus and Syria temporarily, keeping his eye (as the subsequent events showed) on a much bigger goal, i.e. taking control of the whole Argead state. Macedonia and Greece must have been at the centre of such goals.²⁷ The international situation seemed to favour such plans. Cassander had been weakened by the recent war, Lysimachus was engrossed in the matters of his own satrapy, and Antigonos had to focus his energy on driving Seleucus out of Babylonia.

Ptolemy's first step, however, was a series of operations on the coasts of Cilicia, Lycia and Caria. First, in 311 BC, he sent an expedition under the leadership of Leonides, which was somewhat successful in Cilicia, but the acquisitions were short-lived. Ptolemy's main action took place in the two subsequent years. He managed to seize a number of cities and regain control over Cyprus.²⁸ Beginning the operation in Asia Minor, Ptolemy invoked the provision about the freedom of the Greek cities in the 311 BC treaty, officially defending them against Antigonos, who supposedly did not abide by it. However, this catchword also obviously threatened Cassander's interests. Ptolemy's intensive propaganda in Greece indicates that it was this state that was the satrap of Egypt's main goal. Ptolemy's envoys also campaigned in cities under Lysimachus's control.²⁹ What was an extremely important element of this campaign was financial participation in the rebuilding of Thebes, to which cause the king of Sidon, Philokles (probably in the service of the satrap of Egypt), made a contribution.³⁰

The fact that Ptolemy chose the island of Kos as his headquarters also indicates serious plans with regard to Greece. This strategically situated island was ideal for sounding out the mood in Greece and for implementing an active policy on its territory. Obtaining detailed information about Greek affairs was all the more important since the situation was far from clear. The most active representative of Antigonos's interests so far, his nephew Polemaios, who had had considerable success in the recent war, had far greater ambitions, which the *status quo* of 311 BC did not satisfy. As a result of military operations, he had gained a

²⁵ For the former see Huss 2001: 166; for the latter: see Simpson 1954: 27; cf. *OGIS* 5; Buraselis 1982: 18–19.

²⁶ *OGIS* 5, ll. 29–31.

²⁷ Lehmann 1988: 137 n. 34, believes that it was only the agreement with Polemaios that prompted Ptolemy's operation in Greece, cf. Buraselis 1982: 47–49; Huss 2001: 169–170.

²⁸ Diod. 20.19.2–5; 20.21.1–3; Plut., *Dem.* 7.5. Cf. Gesche 1974: 103–125; Bagnall 1976: 39–42; Wörle 1977: 51 n. 46; Hölbl 2001: 19.

²⁹ Diod. 20.19.4.

³⁰ *IG* VII, 2419, col. II, ll. 2–4 = *SIG* 337, ll. 20–22. The same list of donors mentions Philocles twice, probably in 308. For Philocles see Moser 1914: 97–122; Hauben 1970: 1–8; Merker 1970: 141–160.

strong position in central Greece and there are many indications that he had counted on independent reign over the Greek territories. However, the guarantee of the freedom of the *poleis* included in the peace treaty dashed these hopes. To reach his goals, Polemaios needed allies, while he was also a valuable partner for any potential partner. He represented a considerable force in the region, with the mighty fortress of Chalcis on Euboea at the centre of his influence. Moreover, which could be particularly significant, Polemaios controlled Phrygia Minor, thus blocking Antigonos's way through Hellespont to Europe. Polyperchon also became active, deciding to use Alexander the Great's son, Heracles. Having brought him and his mother from Pergamon to Greece (likely in agreement with Antigonos), he declared him king of Macedonia. Polyperchon managed to enlist the support of a considerable number of Greeks, which enabled him to recruit mercenaries and secure Aetolian reinforcements. Cassander's situation was further complicated by the fact that Heracles found allies in Macedonia, too.³¹ However, Cassander quickly moved to neutralise this threat; Polyperchon agreed to eliminate his protégé in exchange for the title of *strategus* of the Peloponnese, as well as privileges and reinforcements. Around that time Cassander also had the teenage Alexander IV and his mother murdered, finally solving the problem of accession to the throne in the Argead dynasty and paving the way to a sole reign of Macedonia, although there are many indications that their deaths were kept secret for the moment.³²

Ptolemy established contact with Ptolemaios. The steps the latter took seem complicated in the light of Diodorus's account. The relevant fragments of Diodorus's narrative (20.19.2; 20.27.3) related to Polemaios's negotiations with Cassander and Ptolemy are so similar to each other that it seems justified to ask whether the Greek historian meant one and the same event. The description of negotiations between Ptolemy and Polemaios suggests that the first contacts between the two generals occurred even before Ptolemy arrived on Kos in 309 BC.³³ It seems, therefore, that there was no time for an earlier treaty between Polemaios and Cassander, although this is not the most significant argument. It would have been natural for Ptolemy, who personally engaged in large scale operations on the coast of Asia Minor in 309 BC, and had plans for an intervention in Greece, to seek an ally in Greece at the beginning of his move; an ally who could provide valuable support particularly in the initial stages of the operation. Diodorus's account clearly indicates that the contact was established on Polemaios's initiative; however, looking from his perspective, it was Ptolemy, acting against Antigonos, who was a natural partner of negotiations. An analysis of Polemaios's motives is another reason to doubt the existence of an agreement between him and Cassander. At first glance, Polemaios's attempt at gaining independence from his uncle could make Cassander, recently an enemy of Antigonos, his natural ally. However, each attempt at increasing his influences in Greece must have meant a conflict with Cassander as well. Of course it is also possible that

³¹ Diod. 20.20.1–4.

³² *Marmor Parium*, *FGrH* 239, B18; Diod. 19.105.2; Paus. 9.7.2; Pomp. Trog. *per.* 15; Just. 15.2.3–5. Chronology of the deaths of Alexander the Great's children is very complicated. Cf. Hammond 1989: 266–269; 167; Green 1990: 28, 747 n. 37; Carney 2000: 147–150.

³³ Diod. 20.27.3: εἰς τὴν Κῶν πλεύσας μετεπέμψατο Πολεμαῖον ὃς ὢν ἀδελφίδου Ἀντιγόνου καὶ δύνανται πεπιστευμένος τοῦτον μὲν κατέλιπε πρὸς δὲ Πτολεμαίου κοινοπραγίαν ἐτίθετο. Obviously Ptolemy who is mentioned by Diodorus, is in fact Polemaios (cf. Seibert 1983: 219–221, with bibliography). Moser 1914: 38 even believes that the alliance itself had been agreed upon before Ptolemy arrived on Kos, but Diodorus's account does not provide a clear answer.

Polemaios, realising this, signed a tactical alliance with Cassander, treating him as an ally against his uncle, and he established contact with Ptolemy only after Cassander made an agreement with Polyperchon, which practically ruined the possibility of implementing Polemaios's plans in Greece. However, there is no evidence that at the time of negotiations with Ptolemy Polemaios knew about the agreement between Cassander and Polyperchon, whose talks were carried out in strict secrecy.³⁴ Moreover, there is no mention whatsoever of Polemaios's reaction to Polyperchon's acts, which threatened not only Cassander but also his own interests. If there had been an alliance between Polemaios and Cassander, it would have been natural for them to undertake a joint action against Polyperchon. Therefore, it can't be excluded that Diodorus made an error and the agreement between Polemaios and Cassander did not exist.³⁵

Polemaios was a very valuable ally for Ptolemy. As has been mentioned, he not only controlled a number of cities in Greece, including Chalcis, but also, being in possession of Phrygia Minor, controlled the passage from Asia to Europe; finally, he had considerable military forces at his disposal.³⁶ Gaining such a trump card in the game against Antigonos in the Aegean Sea and Seleucos's successes in the war against Monophthalmus in Asia³⁷ provided grounds for Ptolemy's more decisive operations in Asia Minor and Greece, where, as a result of the existing *status quo*, the propaganda presenting the satrap of Egypt as a veritable defender of the freedom of the Greek cities could have met with particularly favourable reception. However, Ptolemy's cooperation with Polemaios did not last long. During their meeting on Kos, Ptolemy had his partner killed, considering him, according to Diodorus (20.27.3), to be too ambitious and dangerous. The ease with which Ptolemy got rid of a newly gained ally, even if the latter really had, as Diodorus says, canvassed among the officers and soldiers of his partner, prompts researchers to look for deeper reasons of such an abrupt end to the co-operation. Possibly, Polemaios was a victim of a new diplomatic initiative of Ptolemy, who unexpectedly entered into agreement with Antigonos's son Demetrius, acting on his father's behalf, around that time.³⁸ The historicity of this agreement, not mentioned by Diodorus, who provides a continuous account of the War of the Diadochoi, is doubtful in the eyes of many historians.³⁹ It seems, though, that the *Liber Suda* passage reporting such an agreement could be regarded as reliable⁴⁰ and an explanation of this unexpected alliance may be found in the situation and events at the time. On the eve of his intervention in Greece, Ptolemy would have profited from the isolation of

³⁴ Differently Bakhuizen (1970: 127–128), who believes that the agreement between Polyperchon and Cassander was the reason for that Polemaios went over to Ptolemy's side.

³⁵ Similarly Moser 1914: 37–38 *contra* Simpson 1959: 404; Buraselis 1982: 46; Huss 2001: 172; cf. Wörle 1970: 49–50.

³⁶ Diod. 19.77.2; 19.78.2; 20.27.2; *SIG* 184. According to Diodorus he had during the operations in 313–312 B.C. 5000 infantry, 500 cavalry and 150 battle ships. However, Antigonos has ordered the big part of the fleet back from Greece before the peace in 311 BC was concluded.

³⁷ See Mehl 1986: 129–137; Bosworth 2002: 225–245.

³⁸ So e.g. Moser 1914: 45 *contra* Bakhuizen 1970: 127–128; Huss 2001: 174. Bouché-Leclercq (1903: 60) believes that the reason for Polemaios's death was his plan to ally himself with Cassander, but it seems unlikely at the moment.

³⁹ Bouché-Leclercq 1903: 63, 66; Buraselis 1982: 50. That the agreement did exist believe: Dürrbach 1907: 220–221; Moser 1914: 47–50; Simpson 1959: 404; Will 1979: 69; Bakhuizen 124; Green 1990: 29; Huss 2001: 176.

⁴⁰ *Suda* s.v. Δημήτριος ὁ Ἀντιγόνου. For this passage of the text and its sources see Moser 1914: 47–49; Schmitt 1969: nr 433.

Cassander and Polyperchon, who were his two main rivals on the territory then. He would also have protected his rear against a possible attack by Antigonos, which could have made his operations in Greece considerably easier. Monophthalmus probably also accepted Ptolemy's conquests in Asia Minor since historical sources do not mention his preparations to regain the lost cities and it is difficult to presume that he did not address this issue, even if he was occupied with his fight against Seleucus. Possibly an agreement with Ptolemy was necessary for him precisely because it would have enabled him to devote more energy to the fight on other territories. Everything points to the conclusion that until Demetrius's 307 BC expedition Antigonos had not undertaken any specific actions in Greece or on the Aegean islands, only intervening in Phrygia Minor to protect the Hellespont.⁴¹

The agreement between Antigonos and Ptolemy officially provided that "the whole of Greece would be freed," and the events in Boeotia gave Ptolemy a convenient pretext. During his march towards the Peloponnese, Polyperchon was not let through by the Boeotians, which forced him to spend the winter in Locride.⁴² Interestingly enough, the Boeotians were supported by the Peloponnesians, who could have been influenced by Cratesipolis, the widow of Polyperchon's son murdered in 314 BC, who reigned in Corinth and Sicyon. After Ptolemy's forces landed in Greece in 308 BC, she co-operated with Ptolemy. Cratesipolis was greatly esteemed and it is likely that it was her, alone or in alliance with the satrap of Egypt already at that point, that contributed to the Peloponnesian troops supporting the Boeotians. A request for Ptolemy's help gave him a wonderful opportunity to play the role of defender of the Greeks' freedom and to begin direct military operations.⁴³ In any event, even if the actions were not inspired by Ptolemy, indirectly (through Cratesipolis) or directly, Polyperchon's march could not have influenced the satrap of Egypt's steps, as it is unlikely that Ptolemy made his decision to land in Greece dependent on Polyperchon's attempt at returning to the Peloponnese.⁴⁴

However, Ptolemy made much more far-ranging steps by beginning to court Cleopatra, the sister of Alexander the Great and the last living member of the Argead family.⁴⁵ She had been at Sardes, under Antigonos's control, for a long time. Ptolemy's marriage proposal gave her an opportunity to play an active political role again and to reach for power; considering her bad relations with Antigonos and Argeads' blood on Cassander's hands,⁴⁶ Ptolemy was the only candidate she could accept.⁴⁷ Regardless of whether Alexander IV's death was known at the time and therefore Ptolemy wanted to take

⁴¹ Diod. 20.19.5.

⁴² Diod. 20.28.4.

⁴³ Describing these events, Diodorus does not mention directly the Peloponnesian cities turning to Ptolemy for help, but this is indicated in another fragment of his narrative (20.37.2).

⁴⁴ Bakhuizen (1970: 125) believes so but the chain of events and Ptolemy's moves do not provide a basis for such an assumption.

⁴⁵ Diod. 20.37.3. The hypothesis of Moser (1914: 45) that the marriage between Cleopatra and Ptolemy was a part of the agreement between Antigonos and Ptolemy is unlikely.

⁴⁶ Even if the fact that Alexander the Great's children had died was not known yet, then Cassander was behind Olympias's death and Olympias (Diod. 19.36; Just. 14.6.1–12) and Antigonos's noisy propaganda campaign implied he had had a hand in Alexander's death. (Paus. 1.25.6; Just. 12.14).

⁴⁷ Differently Carney (2000: 127–128), who means that Cleopatra hadn't got hopes of royal power and she only was afraid of her life.

advantage of Cleopatra to take over the job of the young ruler's regent, by marrying Cleopatra Ptolemy had an opportunity to take control of Macedonia.⁴⁸

Ptolemy's expedition proper started in the spring of 308 BC and it turned out that the diplomacy had prepared the operation well. Sailing from the Carian port of Myndos past the Cyclades towards the Peloponnese, Ptolemy assumed the role of the guarantor of the freedom of the *poleis* already on his way. On Andros, he ordered Antigonus's garrison to leave the island, which indicates that the agreement with Demetrius had been broken.⁴⁹ A gold kylix offered up in the temple of Aphrodite on Delos, which was the religious centre of the Cyclades,⁵⁰ is also a testimony of Ptolemy's propaganda efforts in the region. Similar gifts were offered up by Ptolemy's generals, Leonides, Kallikrates and Polyklitos.⁵¹ The satrap of Egypt certainly understood the strategic significance of the islands of this archipelago, and the long stay on Kos is in itself a testament to how much significance Ptolemy attached to the region. First of all, possession of these islands opened the way to the Balkans, it made efficient fight for the control of the Aegean Sea possible, and also provided access to lucrative trade routes. It may be presumed that the majority of Ptolemy's operations at the time were aimed at winning advantage at sea. Ptolemy's fleet, with bases on Cyprus at its disposal, could easily operate in the Cilician waters and hold Antigonus's forces in Syria and Asia Minor in check. Therefore, interest in the Cyclades, a natural bridge between Greece and Asia Minor, went beyond the current Greek plans.

Ptolemy landed in the Corinthian port of Kenchreai, where he used the Panhellenic Isthmian Games for propagating his campaign.⁵² As a result of an agreement with Cratesipolis, he took over control of the two most important Peloponnesian cities in her possession: Corinth and Sicyon.⁵³ Although Polyainos tells us that the mercenary garrison guarding Acrocorinth was against passing the fortress over to Ptolemy, but it is possible that their resistance was a result of Cratesipolis failing to meet their demands rather than a reflection of their anti-Ptolemy attitude. Finally, thanks to Cratesipolis's stratagem Corinth also fell into Ptolemy's hands without a fight. The conquest and garrisoning of Megara secured the Isthmus against an attack from the north.⁵⁴ Controlling these strategically most significant cities on the Peloponnese paved the way for conquering the whole of southern Greece, which was the apparent aim of the expedition.⁵⁵ The most dangerous rivals were not in a favourable situation at the time. Polyperchon was embroiled in fighting,

⁴⁸ Hammond (1989: 267) put the hypothesis, that Ptolemy's plan was to unite, with the help of Cleopatra, the Macedonian world as a "manager and general" of Alexander. However chronology of the deaths of Alexander The Great's sons is very complicated, see n. 32).

⁴⁹ Moser 1914: 51 believes that it was not a move against Antigonus since Ptolemy assumed the role of the defender of the freedom of the Greek cities, and Diodorus's narrative seems to imply that the garrison was removed without a fight on Antigonus's orders. It is difficult to agree with this reasoning, however, since this was against Antigonus's interests in the Aegean region.

⁵⁰ IG XI.2.161; *Inscriptions de Délos*, Paris 1926, no. 296 and 313; Since Ptolemy's name in the inscription is without the royal title, which he took in 305, and prior to 309 and after 308 the island was under Antigonus's control, the gift must have been offered up either during preparations or during Ptolemy's expedition to Greece.

⁵¹ Homolle 1890: 406–407; Schulhof 1908: 65.

⁵² Ptolemy probably has participated in preparations to the Games, cf. Suda s.v. Δημήτριος ὁ Ἀντιγόνου.

⁵³ Diod. 20.37.1–2; Plut., *Dem.* 15.1.3; Polyan. 8.58

⁵⁴ Diog. Laert. 2.115.

⁵⁵ Diod. 20.37.2 states that Ptolemy planned to free the other Greek cities, because it was a purpose of Ptolemy according to his propaganda.

Cassander's reign in Macedonia and Thessaly was unthreatened but there had been voices in Macedonia that he should return power to a descendant of Alexander the Great.⁵⁶ He had to take into account unrest because of his role in the murder of Alexander the Great's children, and his enemies' skilful propaganda could also use Olympias's death to undermine his position in the Macedonian monarchy.

Thus Ptolemy gained important footholds on the Peloponnese and had favourable conditions to expand his propaganda campaign, spreading the freedom of the Greek cities. This could have been a strong weapon, especially considering Cassander's policy, which based his position in Greece on manning garrisons and supporting authorities that favoured him. Ptolemy did not limit himself to the catchword of the freedom of the *poleis*. His son, Lagos, participated in the chariot race in the Arcadian *Lykaia* in 308–307 BC, which certainly was a gesture towards the Peloponnesian communities.⁵⁷ It is possible that the statue of Demetrius and Ptolemy crowned by Elias erected in Olympia and the votive gift offered up in the same place by Ptolemy should be dated to this period.⁵⁸ Although Pausanias reported that Ptolemy signed his name as Macedonian, whereas in fact he was the king of Egypt, such an inscription on the base of the sculpture may indeed indicate that it dates from before Ptolemy took the title of king. Moreover, Pausanias may have called him king due to the fact that in his time Ptolemy was mostly remembered as king of Egypt and the founder of the Lagids dynasty.

Corinth was of particular importance among the cities conquered by Ptolemy, as it was the centre of the League of Corinth founded by Philip in 337 BC, whose hegemonist was originally Philip and then his son. After Alexander's death, as a result of the Lamian war, its existence *de facto* ended. Unfortunately it is impossible to say unambiguously whether Ptolemy intended to revive the League or create a new one, modelled on it to some extent. Luckily for Ptolemy, the year of his Greek expedition coincided with the Olympic Games, which gave him a particularly good opportunity to manifest his intentions, especially proclaiming the freedom of the Greek cities. It is possible that the *Liber Suda* account (s.v. Δημήτριος ὁ Ἀντιγόνου: αὐτονόμους... δὴ τὰς πλείστας τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων ἀφίησι) is an echo of such a public declaration. Titus Flamininus used similar circumstances to proclaim the freedom of the Greek states on behalf of Rome in 196 BC. Such a step by Ptolemy, although not confirmed by historical sources, would be logical, and the silence of Diodorus, who provided a continuous account of these years, is not conclusive, especially since he mentioned Ptolemy's plans to free other Greek cities,⁵⁹ which could have been a trace of such a public declaration. However, the matter of reviving the League of Corinth is different, even though there is an analogy. It was in 302 BC at the Isthmus of Corinth that Demetrius Poliorcetes (following the orders of his father from 306 BC) called a congress during which the Hellenic League, an extension of the League of Corinth, was formed.⁶⁰ However, reasons for attributing similar intentions to Ptolemy are too scant. In Athenaeus's citation of Kallixeinos's account of the famous *pompé* organised by Ptolemy II, a statue symbolising the city of Corinth was carried.⁶¹ This does not necessarily indicate a reference

⁵⁶ Diod. 19.105.2.

⁵⁷ *JG* V 2, 550.

⁵⁸ Paus. 6.3.1; 6.16.3.

⁵⁹ Diod. 20.37.2.

⁶⁰ For that topic see Seibert 1983: 148–153, see also for further reading.

⁶¹ Athen. 5.196a–203b = Kallikseinos of Rodos, *FGrH* 627, F2. Reading of the text is not clear, see Huss 2001: 177 n. 642. On *pompé* in the Ptolemaic propaganda see also Fraser 1972: I, 193, 231–232, Rise

to the renewal of the League of Corinth by the founder of the dynasty. It could have been a reference to Ptolemy's whole Greek campaign and the whole dynasty acting as defenders of the Greeks. Such a theme was often present in the foreign policy of the Lagids, and in this case Corinth was the most important place where Ptolemy I had been present. A cortege of women walking in the procession had a similar symbolic meaning; it was a reference to Ptolemy freeing Asian Minor cities. It is also possible that if Ptolemy had indeed planned to form a League on the Greek territory, it would have had, at least initially, more limited reach and would have included the Peloponnesian cities which were the resource base for his operations. Similarly, Antigonos Monophthalmus implemented the catchword of the freedom of the *poleis* by entering many-sided military alliances, such as the Nesiotic League, or the renewed League of Corinth. It would have been natural, therefore, for Ptolemy to strive to form an alliance with the Peloponnesian cities, and historical sources indeed mention co-operation.⁶² In any case Ptolemy was not the first to attempt to form such a league – in 318 BC Polyperchon intended to form such a *symmachia*. If we assume that the ancient accounts that have survived to our times indeed passed over Ptolemy forming a League on the Greek territory in silence, it is more likely that it would have been indeed more ephemeral and limited in scope than a Panhellenic initiative invoking Philip's ideas. Although it cannot be categorically excluded, it must remain in the sphere of speculation.

Ptolemy's propaganda, however, met with unenthusiastic response of the Greeks. It can be assumed that they had managed to become more resistant to the idea of the freedom of the *polis* that the Diadochi used instrumentally. Moreover, Peloponnesian cities were to finance their own independence.⁶³ It was the failure to supply the promised grain and money that Ptolemy used as a pretext to quit active operations in Greece. The reasons why Ptolemy abandoned Greek matters so easily and went back to Egypt were a subject of many attempted explanations by researchers. In this context, historians mentioned fears connected with the attack of Agathocles and Ophellas in Africa, and the latter becoming independent of Ptolemy in approximately 309–308 BC.⁶⁴ It seems that a host of factors were at work. Ptolemy could have concluded that in view of the relatively small response to his actions among the Greeks, especially little willingness on the part of the *poleis* to engage in active fight by his side, the whole campaign would be more difficult than he could have expected and would have engaged his forces for longer than he could afford it. It is quite possible that the forces involved in the expedition were not very large, since it had been expected that the Greeks themselves would lend considerable support. Finally, whatever plans Ptolemy might have had in connection with Alexander the Great's sister, at that point they

1983: 45–115; Hazzard 2000: 66–75; Thompson 2000. Billows (1990: 15, n. 19) believes that Ptolemy envisaged a restoration of League of Corinth.

⁶² Diod. 20.37.2.

⁶³ Diod. 20.37.2.

⁶⁴ The precise dating of Ophellas's emancipation from Ptolemy's power is a contentious issue, see Mørkholm 1980: 147; Laronde 1987: 356–358; Huss 2001: 179. G. Horat Zuffa (1971/1972) proposed a completely different interpretation with regard to the goals of Ptolemy's operation, concluding that Ptolemy's Greek expedition was in consultation with Cassander and against Antigonos. An indication of this would be e.g. Ophellas recruiting soldiers and colonists in Athens; since it was ruled by Cassander's supporters, it would only have been possible with his consent. However, Ophellas was more likely acting on his own in connection with his African campaign with Agathocles (Diod. 20.40.5 mentions this event in this context). In this case the fact would not only deny Ptolemy's anti-Cassander goals, but it would rather confirm them.

had been most likely thwarted. Probably before Ptolemy left Greece, he had received information about Cleopatra's elimination on Antigonos's orders.⁶⁵ Her death must have also made Ptolemy reconsider the point of his expedition. All those factors played a role in Ptolemy's decision to work out a truce with Cassander.⁶⁶

In any event, Ptolemy was not abandoning Greek matters completely when he left the Peloponnese in 308 BC. He left his garrisons in Corinth and Sicyon, which did contradict his image of the liberator of the Greek cities, but it gave him a real opportunity to return to the Greek issue in future. Coins made in Egypt show that Ptolemy treated the cities as an integral part of the territory under his direct rule.⁶⁷ He left Leonides behind to protect his interests.⁶⁸ All this indicates that Ptolemy treated his absence in Greece as a temporary measure and it is difficult to believe that the Lagid considered the territory too remote for further operations. The three cities under his control gave him an excellent strategic position for future operations. However, history took a different turn and the subsequent events – Demetrius Poliorcetes in Greece, difficult fights over Cyprus, the threat of Antigonos's direct invasion in Egypt, another secession of Cyrene – meant that Ptolemy did not launch further military operations in Greece, and the footholds that he had won there were lost.⁶⁹ Demetrius Poliorcetes's successes in Greece also stemmed from the fact that his actions were grounded in Antigonos's, and particularly Polemaios's, earlier accomplishments, whereas Ptolemy's catchword of freeing the Greek cities lacked this reference to past events. Nevertheless, despite the ultimate fiasco of the 308 BC expedition, subsequent rulers of the Lagid dynasty could refer to their ancestor's operations in the Aegean Sea in their policy.

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⁶⁵ Diod. 20.37.3–6; cf. *Marmor Parium*, FGH 239, F B 19.

⁶⁶ Diodorus (20.37.2) relates about a peace, but the circumstances convince to a cease-fire (Huss 2001: 178 n. 647).

⁶⁷ Although Ravel (1936: 98–108) dated the coins to 306, the possibility of such a precise dating was subsequently rejected and at present it is not excluded that they were minted already in 308 B.C. Cf. Seibert 1983: 132.

⁶⁸ Suda s.v. Δημήτριος ὁ Ἀντιγόνου. Cf. Bengtson 1937: 143–147.

⁶⁹ Diod. 20.102.2–4; 20.103.1–3; Plut., *Dem.* 25.1; Polyan. 4.7.2; 4.7.8.

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